

IN OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 461

**TESTIMONY OF ERIC BROWN
GENERAL COUNSEL
CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF POLICE UNIONS
AFSCME, COUNCIL 15**

**BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE OF
THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

MARCH 24, 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee, my name is Eric Brown and I am General Counsel with AFSCME Council 15, a labor union representing the interests of almost 3000 police officers in 58 municipal communities throughout Connecticut.

I am here today to speak in opposition to the following bill before this Committee:

**SENATE BILL 461 - AN ACT CONCERNING DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTION OFFICIALS AS PEACE OFFICERS AND PERSONS
AUTHORIZED TO SERVE AS ARMED SECURITY GUARDS IN SCHOOLS.**

This bill is an apparent response to school security concerns raised after the Sandy Hook tragedy last winter. It would give state corrections officers the authority to perform police officer duties outside of correction facilities or correctional facility jurisdiction in place of certified police officers.

We oppose this bill because it would undermine the public safety of our communities by placing police officer responsibilities in the hands of individuals who are not certified police officers.

The performance of police duties is not a fungible skill that can be performed by anyone who serves in the public safety industry. Our police officers receive intense long-term training in the police academy when they are hired, and undergo regular refresher training on an annual basis throughout their careers.

On a daily basis only certified police officers address the unique public safety concerns raised in their particular communities and they perform their duties with the knowledge and experience gained only from performing their unique functions on a daily basis. To hand their responsibilities over to untrained and inexperienced personnel is short-sighted and dangerous not only to the community but also to the public safety personnel in the community.

Only certified police officers should be responsible for performing police functions in our community. They are trained to do the job, and they have the experience and knowledge to do it well.